

# Japan Christian Activity News

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## CCA ASSEMBLY MEETS IN BANGALORE MAY 18-28

SHOJI Tsutomu, NCC General Secretary recently returned from the Christian Conference of Asia 7th Assembly in Bangalore, India. He comments on the assembly for JCAN readers:

"Living in Christ with People," the theme of the conference, was emphasized in testimonies from a wide range of groups: people with physical disabilities, a young woman factory laborer, a Korean Urban Industrial Mission worker, representatives of outcast and tribal people and slum dwellers in India.

In the D.T. Niles memorial lectures, the Bible studies, classes and section meetings the participants spoke in view of various oppressed people. Japan's concerns were also heard as we discussed the Buraku-min issue, nuclear waste problems, and the sale of powdered infant formula in the third world countries.

As I listened and participated in the conference, I began to feel the discrepancy between the theme of "...With People" and the reality of the church. In India the caste system is still reflected in separate churches or at least in separate communion cups, and in Japan a special committee on Buraku problems gets little response. The voices we heard were not representative of the church as a whole, but they pointed up the gap which still exists within the body of Christ. The more we focused on renewal of the church, the more clearly the discrepancy was revealed.

But, the emphasis upon "with people" will never fail its original intention, for no doubt, the age of people has come in Asia, and CCA, concerned churches and Christians have been awakened to this fact. Today people are becoming more and more conscious that they are not just the object of oppression but the real subject of history and many Christians are realizing that the church can no longer just preach

the gospel, but that through listening to the disabled, the outcasts and the exploited it can rediscover the reality of the gospel and thus live in Christ with people.

In the assembly meeting, for some, "Living in Christ with People" still meant to take the gospel to others as though it were a monopoly of the church. Others said that to learn and to listen to the gospel through people, to rediscover it through experience and struggle with people is the mission of the church. An example is the Korean delegate who said how difficult it is to preach to the students who are fighting and have been arrested, but that he could simply listen and hear what they were saying, and could find Christ there anew. The existence of Christians who listen to people is a sign of hope that there will be change in the church and in society.

(At the assembly Rev. Shoji was elected as a member of the General Committee from Japan for a four year term. The General Committee is made up of 16 representatives from member countries plus five officers and a General Secretary.)#

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## GOD'S POWER DISPLAYED IN A BLIND MAN

*The following is a report given by HIRAYAMA Masuta at the 7th General Assembly of the CCA in Bangalore from May 18-28.*

I am congenitally and totally blind. It means that I don't have any concept of seeing things nor visualizing things. If you close your eyes probably you can make a clear visual image of your mother or of your friends but I can't do that. Even the colors and the light mean nothing to me. I don't know the darkness or the brightness of light.

I went to a school for the blind when I was six years old. I had to stay at the school dormitory because it was the only school I could enter and it was very far from my home. During the first few years everything was interesting at the school. But as I grew older, I lost my interest in studying there. The reason I didn't want to study was because most of the people thought that blindness was caused by sin. They said, "You are blind because you or your ancestors sinned in the past so the only thing you can do is to accept this and do good things in this life. Then you will be sighted in your next life." When I heard this strange principle from a Buddhist priest invited by the school master I was shocked and discouraged.

The second reason why I hated to study was because my future occupation was already set. I would be a masseur practicing massage and acupuncture, a traditional occupation for blind persons in Japan. I didn't want to be a masseur, but I couldn't change my future. I thought of many things and spent the nights wondering, but one year before my graduation, a dramatic thing happened. One of my friends insisted that I go to a Bible class every Saturday, because he was discouraged like I before, but by attending the class he found light in Jesus Christ.

I hated Jesus because I didn't want him to control my life but after all, I couldn't do anything else so I decided to attend the Bible class with him. At that time, Mr. SUZUKI who was also a blind person and an English teacher at our blind school, was holding a Bible class both in English and Japanese at his home. There I met many blind friends and upper classmen who were nurtured at Mr. Suzuki's Bible class.

At first I couldn't believe that they were blind the same as I, because they had a lot of spirit and they sang hymns very loudly and happily. I wanted to know the secret of why they were so different from other blind persons. I wanted to be like them. So I decided to believe in God and accept Jesus Christ as my Saviour although I didn't know much about Him. From that moment, I was free from the idea that I am blind because I myself or my parents sinned. Through reading John chapter 9, Jesus gave me relief and real happiness because I felt that I was no longer a sinner.

I went to college and to the United States as an International Christian Youth Exchange student and now I am working at the local Braille Library as a proof reader. Of course, I have had to struggle in my work but I have spent many happy days.

I am a member of the Japan Christian Council of the Blind which is facing the very serious problem of a lack of young Christian members. We don't have young adults as we did in the past. When I was a boy my English teacher told us the Good News, but now, nobody tells the students of the public school for the blind about Jesus Christ because of the strict application of the national policy of separation of education and religion. Who will do that? All blind persons must have an equal opportunity to know Jesus Christ, so I visit the dormitory every Tuesday and read the Scriptures with them. I do it because I want to share the happiness of living in Christ with them.

But when I think of the churches, I am not satisfied with them. Why don't Christian churches accept us as human beings of equal worth? I would like to ask you this question: "How many disabled persons do you have in your churches?" And also, "Why can't I see other handicapped persons, with the exception of just a few persons, at this CCA Conference?"

In Japan the budget for social welfare is increasing and handicapped persons are getting benefits from the government. But we are not demanding material benefits. We are demanding equal opportunities. We are demanding equal dignity and pride. Disabled persons should have

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the same chance to know and to love Jesus Christ as you, because Jesus opened the eyes of blind persons and freed us from the prison of discrimination. He gave us hope, dignity and pride, but when we go to the churches we have to face discrimination. I think the church should fully accept disabled people so that it can experience the wholeness of Christian community. #

#### FATHER ED DE LA TORRE ADDRESSES ASSEMBLY

*This is a summary of Fr. Ed de la Torre's address to the "Festival of Faith" in the CCA Assembly. Fr. Ed was arrested in Dec. 1974 and released in April 1980. Presently, he is studying in Rome.*

Several years ago Fr. Ed de la Torre, while in confusion about theology and politics, found consolation in the quotation, "you must confront vague ideas with clear images." In his address he used many clear images.

Some years ago he was struck by the contrast between two liturgies - that of mass in the church and masses of people outside the church. He shared how he was led to the people's liturgy (people-action) and from that to prison and then back out again. He feels that to live with struggling people does not mean abandoning the church or Christ. Earlier in his life he was invited to study theology in Rome. He refused to go because he wanted to be a Filipino theologian and he opposed the idea of having to go abroad to learn theology in order to become a "theological merchant." So he stayed in the Philippines and searched for theology among the simple mountain tribes. While he was studying their culture he didn't know that their land was being taken from them. As he visited them he remarked that they, although not Christians, represented what good Christians should be. The people responded by saying that it was the Christians who were taking their land!

Father Ed believes that we need to listen to the people in order to find answers in Christianity for their concerns. He felt he could help the people not by speaking in theological language, but by being with them in their struggles in the court room and in their demonstrations. He noted that Christians believe that God doesn't live in a building but yet there are many many houses built for God in the Philippines and few built for His people.

Father Ed learned, while in prison, that it helped the people's cause to have some church people among the prisoners. As they celebrated mass together they realized that the first Eucharist which Christ and His apostles celebrated was a pre-arrest experience.

"We had just one mass, not many for it was just one prison. In this one mass, it was not just a question of a Catholic or a Protestant taking part. There were also student groups who were not particularly Christian, there were members of the guerilla movement, there were labor union leaders and there were also members of the Philippines communist Party. Although they did not openly admit it.

"We all sat together and we called it a United Front Mass But a United Front Mass was not just a liberal kind of acceptance of each other; it was an attempt to discover a thread of meaning that we could all grasp and share."

As we suffer in the struggles of the people against pressures from churches, corporations, families, governments we show our oneness with the people. We must fight against internal weakness and be prepared for crises. We must remember our resolutions and principals.

"Now is the time to live with the fact that although we do believe in people's power, we must live with people's weakness. And I hope, and perhaps we will find new meaning in the Christian tradition of reconciliation and forgiveness, for it is in that spirit that we should ask the people whom we can reach to forgive us. To forgive even before our repentance and once again give them hope. trust and acceptance. Let us hope that the grace of their forgiveness gives us the courage and the strength to repent. Not believing that this time we will be saved and do everything perfectly well. No, knowing that later we will need to be forgiven again and repent but hoping that we will not be repeating exactly the same weaknesses and because of that we will overcome them as we live in Christ, with people through their suffering, through dying, but also in their uprising." #





## LIVING AS A KOREAN IN JAPAN

Our family of six lived in a one room apartment on the second floor, which had two windows on the east and west. So often my father used violence on mother and us children. Every day my mother went all over town collecting old newspapers and things which people threw away. We hardly had enough money for food. When I went to elementary school I noticed my cap had the unfamiliar name of "Yama-shita" on it in Japanese. My classmates disliked me since what I ate seemed to smell bad to them. I fought to keep from being ostracized, but eventually I was alone and felt very lonely. The yearly eye check-up in school revealed that my eyes were diseased with trachoma. After that, absolutely no one played with me. I sat alone on the stone steps and blankly watched the playground.

A year later when my eyes were completely healed, my classroom teacher announced my recovery but he did not encourage the other children to play with me. On the field day in the fall everybody sang the national anthem "Kimigayo," but as a Korean I did not feel like singing the song or looking at the flag. Neither did I have any special feeling toward my motherland Korea, since movies told us only the miseries of the Korean people and the sad situation in Korea. No one was very proud of being a Korean in Japan.

During junior high school I had no enthusiasm; I was afraid of making a mistake. However, when my home room teacher said that Koreans and Japanese are equal human beings and we should not discriminate against Koreans. I felt that this was the first challenge to my life style. But still I hid my real feelings by telling myself repeated lies. When I was a junior in high school I received a ¥2,000 scholarship monthly from "Chosen Shogakukai." In the summer I had a chance to study the Korean language with other friends. I never tried to go beyond my own thoughts nor did I have the desire to build relationships with others.

But in this learning process I met a teacher through whom I first experienced the joy of sharing my life with others. At this time I decided to use my Korean name. It took me five years to get used to my own name. At the same time I felt the difficulty of uniting with Korean people since I was born in Japan and spoke Japanese better than Korean.

In the meantime, I participated in a movement to support a Korean's legal status in Japan. I collected 500 people's signatures and attended court trials. Through this activity my value system gradually changed. I learned that for the Koreans the immigration officers were more fearsome than the police in Japan. As I learned the history of Korea I came to realize how badly the Koreans in Japan were treated and why my father used nothing but violence on us. The movement was supported by many Japanese, and this was a real surprise for persons like myself who had nothing but distrust for others. These people spent many hours and much money to rescue a Korean when most of the people stayed within their own life style and even many Koreans kept silent. In my work I could not accept others since I did not have an appropriate way to communicate with others. My distrust and solitude built up more and more.

During the first year I was working in a company I visited a pastor and asked about the Christmas service. After Christmas I joined the Bible study class in the church. More than studying the Bible I enjoyed the warmth of the people. The pastor's supper to celebrate my adulthood and a church member's telegram added to my joy. They were unexpected surprises I had never had before in my life. The church was not only a place to find relief from the harsh reality of my life, but it was also a group that accepted me as I was and struggled together with me.

On the other hand it was very difficult for me to accept retarded children, and unconsciously I discriminated against them. Changing to my Korean name and trying to become a Korean meant nothing unless I recognized the ugliness of my own sin of discrimination against others. Living as a Korean in Japan liberated me from the bondage of a false image through accepting my own weakness and seeking the faith that all people can live together as God's family.

*(The above has been translated from the article in the June issue of "Fukuin to Sekai.")*





## TOSHIMA PARK WAR MONUMENT TRIAL

On May 21 the fourth hearing of the citizens' protest against the war monument constructed in Toshima Park, was held in the Tokyo district court. On the grounds that building a war monument in a public park is unconstitutional, Mrs. YANMA Kazuko and Rev. MORITA Yukio with nine other citizens initiated the case on Aug. 15, 1980.

The monument site is the place where seven Class A Pacific War criminals were executed after the war criminal trials. In July 1964 the government decided to keep the site for a memorial for the war criminals when the Sugamo prison was moved. In 1976 the Toshima Ward accepted a plan to build a monument for the war "victims," the term used instead of war "criminals."

In 1979 three blue-prints for such a monument were presented. Immediately six citizen groups voiced opposition to the construction on the grounds that a monument to praise war heroes in a public park would have the effect of promoting the remilitarization of Japan. In Jan. 1980 the Ward council approved a plan unilaterally, before the opposition groups had time to protest. In May 1980 Mrs. Yanma and ten other people requested a review of the plan, hoping thereby to halt the construction, but in June 1980 the Ward office started the construction. Thereupon the citizen groups whose rights were ignored by the Ward office took the case to court, requesting the removal of the monument from the park.

The fifth hearing will be held from 11:30 to 12:00 noon on July 10. Groups opposing the war monument are requesting an international presence in the court room to help this case become more widely known. People who are interested in attending the trial please contact the NCC office. (03-213-0372)

## FUSAE ICHIKAWA MEMORIAL SERVICE

Members of 48 women's organizations in Japan sponsored a service of remembrance for former diet member ICHIKAWA Fusae on May 25 at Kensei Memorial Hall

Ms. Ichikawa, an advocate of peace, disarmament and women's rights, was president of the "48 Women" Organization. She served in the upper house of the diet

## ANTI-MILITARY PROTEST IN NAGOYA -- AMERICANS DEMONSTRATE FOR PEACE

On May 7, 16,000 kilometers from Washington D.C. where Prime Minister Suzuki and President Reagan were meeting, Americans held a walk for peace in Nagoya to protest the U.S. government's pressure on Japan to increase its military capabilities. The protesters walked through the downtown area in a pouring rain and passed out 1000 pamphlets opposing the U.S. military policy. They carried picket signs and wore sashes with the message, "Gunbi Atsuryoku Yamete" ("Stop Military Pressure") written in Kanji.

Reports and photos of the demonstration appeared in local and national newspapers (Asahi, Chunichi, Mainichi, Nagoya Times and Yomiuri) and on several radio and TV stations, including the nationwide six and eleven o'clock NHK news.

The total number of protesters was six.

"One of our main goals, besides trying to stop military expansion, was to show the Japanese public that not all Americans support Reagan and his policies," said Tom MURTHA, one of the demonstrators.

To ensure that the Japanese heard of the demonstration, the six Americans wrote simple post cards to newspapers, news agencies, radio and TV stations. On the post cards--written in Japanese--they summarized their purpose and belief, stated the time and place of the protest, and included some names and telephone numbers to contact for further information. They followed this up on the day of the walk by calling up the same media offices and reminding them of the protest.

In order to appear on the 6 o'clock news  
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longer than any other member, coming back from retirement at the urging of her young supporters to run for the office in a "clean" election campaign. She died on Feb. 11, 1981 at the age of 87.

Excerpts from a documentary film of her life were shown at the service. The film will be shown again on June 29 and 30 at Toshima Kokaido near Ikebukuro station. (Tel. 03-981-1009)





(Anti-Military Protest . . .)

and in the evening newspapers, the protesters decided to hold the demonstration from 10:00 a.m. until mid-afternoon. On the morning of the protest when they met under Nagoya's TV tower for a group prayer before the walk, they were surprised to find themselves outnumbered three to one by media personnel.

"The demo was a success in that it reached a large audience. Hopefully, it will stimulate some of them so they'll get involved," said a soaked Caro KRECH, a three-year Nagoya resident, right after the demonstration.

The success was due partly to careful planning. In early April, the six Americans announced an open meeting to discuss the military expansion problem. They put up posters and placed ads in newspapers announcing the meeting. On April 18, they met with ten concerned Japanese—including teachers, a priest, students, and housewives—to discuss the issue. Over cups of tea and snacks, they decided that some form of action was necessary to make more people aware of the danger of military build-up in Japan. They decided to hold a walk for peace on the day Suzuki was to meet with Reagan. They agreed that an American-only demonstration would receive the widest media coverage.

The last thing we want to do is separate our movement from the Japanese," said David FLEISHMAN, who was active in the

peace movement for many years before he came to Japan. "In fact, without Japanese advice and aid the protest would never have been a success. We must and will continue to work together with Japanese individuals and groups. But in this one case, we knew we'd get better coverage if it was Americans vs. the American government's policy. We made sure not to say anything against the Japanese government.

The statement which the Americans passed out to the umbrella-carrying pedestrians criticized the U.S. military policy from a social, economic and safety standpoint. "We believe the U.S. has no right to demand that Japan follow the American military policy," the statement read. "We are afraid if Japan allows itself to be pressured into the U.S. military plan, it will have the same problems our country has. It will again find itself responsible to repression and misery throughout East Asia and the Pacific.... At home, Japan will have worse social problems, more inflation and higher unemployment.... Increasing Japanese and American military won't make us safer. It will only persuade the Soviets to increase their military more, leading to more tension and greater chance of war... We call on our President and demand an end to U.S. military pressure on Japan."

After the demonstration, the Americans sent copies of their statement and newspaper clips to the White House and vari-

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(Anti-Military Protest . . .)

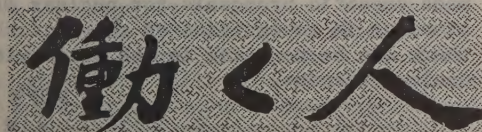
ous groups in America, such as the War Resisters League, Coalition for New Foreign and Military Policy, and the National Council of Churches.

They are currently working with Japanese friends in putting together a presentation for schools, churches, and other groups, which will address the military problem, offer alternative actions, and get other concerned people involved. Their next meeting will be on July 15 in Nagoya. For further information telephone John MAIER. (052-798-9624)

AINU DISCRIMINATION

Most tourists in Hokkaido want to go see an Ainu village out of curiosity. Some people refuse to show them around, since they know that this tourism is closely connected with exploitative mainland Japanese organizations. Some Ainu people sell their products with pride in their crafts and traditions but these are only a few people. Tourists wish to have their pictures taken with a village man who is chosen to be chief as directed by tourists. This is a demeaning practice. By their actions the tourists express a discriminatory attitude because of the Ainu people's underdeveloped social condition. The word "Ainu" originally meant "human being" but the implication of the word has been transformed into a discriminatory use. Discrimination against others indicates one of the most specific examples of our sin in that we do not respect others personhood. We discriminate against many others as if they have nothing to be proud of and the truth is that we have nothing to be proud of ourselves. We are so insensitive that we do not feel the pain of others as they are treated as inferiors without real worth,

(Taken from "Hatarakuhito")



ANNOUNCEMENTS

On July 3 (6:30-8:30p.m.) NCC plans to co-sponsor with "Yai Yukura" (Ainu Peoples Association) a meeting on "Ainu" issues at Shinseikai Kan (near Shinanomachi station) in Tokyo. The meeting will include reports on two recent meetings regarding race and minority issues. One was held at Canberra, Australia (April 27-May 2), World Council of Indigenous Peoples, hosted by the National Aboriginal Conference and another was at Medan, Indonesia sponsored by Christian Conference of Asia, Urban Rural Mission Race and Minority Issues.

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"Partners in Life" published by World Council of Churches has now been translated into Japanese. This translation plus SHIMAZAKI Mitsumasa's "The Handicapped and the Church in Japan" and poems by the handicapped have now been made into a book titled "Kamino Kazoku" published by Shinkyō Shuppan. As a celebration of this publication NCC's "Task Force of Disabled Persons and the Church" is holding a symposium on June 30th from 6:00-8:30 p.m. at the National Handicapped People's Welfare Foundation building (near the Christian Center) in Tokyo. Speakers will be AOKI Masaru, "Unified Education with the Handicapped", OKA Yukiko, "The Handicapped People in other Countries", KUMAZAWA Yoshinobu, "A Theologian's View", YAMASHITA Tsutomu, "Mentally Handicapped People - Retardation" and SHIMAZAKI, Physically Handicapped." The meeting is open to the public and your participation will be welcome.

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On July 2 (6:30-9:00 p.m.) there will be a report on the 7th General Assembly of Christian Conference of Asia at the conference room (2nd floor) of the Christian Center in Waseda. Rev. SHOJI Tsutomu will report on the highlights of the Assembly and the task of Japan's role in mission. Rev. John Nakajima will explain the changes in the CCA structure and its nine committees. Also others who attended the meeting will report on their evaluations. Come and join in the meeting.



## HEADLINE-MAKING EVENTS: THE LONG ROAD TO A NUCLEAR-FREE SOCIETY

With the backing of Japan's national defense establishment and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Prime Minister SUZUKI Zenko was reassured concerning Japan's "alliance" with the US during his meetings with US President REAGAN in May. However, after his return home Suzuki said in public that the purpose of the alliance was related to economic benefits for both countries, even though while in the USA he agreed with the U.S. interpretation of the relationship as implying a military component leading to Japan's rearmament. This created great confusion and even caused Foreign Minister ITO and his first secretary to resign.

Further, Japanese newspapers have been deeply concerned over the U.S. nuclear submarine George Washington's collision with a Japanese freighter. The Japanese reacted with displeasure when a U.S. military vessel with its superior navigation technology left the scene of the accident without rescuing the Japanese crew. With this incident people began to question the meaning of the U.S.-Japan Security Treaty, wondering if its only true intent was protection of the United States.

On May 18 former ambassador to Japan, Edwin REISCHAUER, was interviewed by a Japanese newspaper and in it seemed to question the validity of Japan's three non-nuclear principles, those being: non-production, non-possession and non-introduction of nuclear weapons into Japan.

Public suspicion was aroused over the distinct possibility that the U.S. aircraft carrier "Midway," home-based in Yokosuka, carries nuclear weapons. Reischauer's words triggered public fear over the presence of nuclear arms and various citizen's movements demonstrated in protest. In Hiroshima delegates from civic organizations along with atomic bomb victims began a sit-in protest in front of the peace monument. Their appeal was to the effect that radiation destruction resulting from the bomb is not a thing of the past but is in fact a vivid reality of the present.

On May 27 the Asahi newspapers reported the results of a survey among Diet members relative to Japan's three non-nuclear principles. To questionnaires sent to 755 diet members there was an 85 per cent response rate. Eighty-six per cent

of those responding (73 per cent of the total diet constituency) rejected the introduction of nuclear weapons into Japan.

On June 5 the mayor of Yokosuka city, along with more than 4,000 citizens protested on sea and land the Midway's entry into their port. About 40 Kyodan ministers and other Christians joined in the demonstration.

In stark contrast, Liberal Democratic party delegates went to Yokosuka to welcome the Midway. In the last Diet sessions a new national defense budget was proposed and accepted by the Cabinet Council containing a 7.5 per cent increase in defense spending while most other proposed 1982 budget items stayed at the same levels enacted last year.

The newly appointed Minister of Foreign Affairs, SONODA Sunao, said in open Diet session that Reischauer's press comments were not helpful in the present situation and the minister called the ex-ambassador an "uncalled-for meddler."

Public opinion seems to indicate that U.S.-Japan relations are worsening and the nuclear issue may greatly affect the present conservative political party and the U.S.-Japan Security Treaty. Moreover, people are concerned over the fact that so-called "national defense" can develop into offensive military power even under Japan's peace constitution.

The Foreign Affairs Committee of the Lower House passed a resolution on June 5, 1981 calling for a continuation of Japan's efforts working for a decrease in nuclear arms through cooperation with the U.N.

On June 8 various citizen groups (6,500 participants) united in a rally and demonstration in the down-town Tokyo area under the slogans, "Smash the Japan-U.S. Security Treaty" and "Don't Allow an Invasive War." The Nobel prize winner DR. YUGAWA Hideki and 26 other prominent physicists and scholars met in Kyoto to discuss the nuclear weapons issue and made specific proposals for nuclear disarmament in recognition of the fact that there can be no peace in the world with nuclear weapons.

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